

of Fame. The recognition commemorates the achievements and contributions of citizens age 65 and older. Inductees are selected through a statewide nomination and judging process. The program distinguishes individuals in the areas of community service, education, the work force, and the arts.

Helen is a true public servant who has devoted many years to serving the residents of Madison County and Nameoki Township. Her no-nonsense style may have ruffled some feathers throughout the years, but she has never been afraid to fight for her constituents.

Helen, thank you for your public service.

HONORING BOB BUTLER

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to honor the longest serving mayor in the State of Illinois, Bob Butler, who is a very good friend of Marion. Now, he is a very good friend, but, whenever he first took office, he didn't know me well because I was only 2½ years old. He was first elected in April of 1963, and Bob is retiring this month after 55 years of service.

Bob has always been a straight shooter and a good public servant. His progrowth agenda has helped turn Marion into a regional powerhouse along I-57 in the State of Illinois. In fact, the industrial park in Marion is named after him, and Bob fondly refers to the city of Marion as the hub of the universe. He represents the dedication to public service that should serve as an inspiration to all of us.

Mayor Bob Butler, we honor you, and wish you a happy and well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING SAM AND EVA JONES

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to recognize Sam and Eva Jones of Marion, Illinois. This remarkable couple was first married on September 27, 1936. Now, if you think about that, that was 80 years ago.

Sam worked for Central Illinois Power Service until he retired in 1978. Eva worked at Norge in Herrin and later as a cook for Washington Elementary School. Pillars of the community, they were longtime members of First Baptist Church in Marion and the Williamson County Farm Bureau. In 1993, their farm was honored as Family Farm of the Year by the Farm Bureau.

Sadly, Eva passed last month, at the age of 101. My prayers are with Sam and the entire Jones family. Thank you for making southern Illinois a wonderful place to live. God bless you.

PUERTO RICO'S SHADOW DELEGATION TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) for 5 minutes.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, today, after almost 120 years under the American flag, Puerto Rico remains as a colony of the

United States, or under the Territorial Clause, to use the constitutional term.

Our residents are subject to a second class citizenship. For all these years, the Federal Government has denied equal rights to all Puerto Ricans who have, in war and peace, made countless contributions to our Nation; who have bravely fought in every conflict since the Great War, defending our democratic values, yet they are being denied the right to vote for their Commander-in-Chief and have full representation in this Congress.

A large number of them have made the ultimate sacrifice, and when they do, their casket is flown back, covered in an American flag with 50 stars, and without the one representing them.

Puerto Rico has experienced longstanding inequities under Federal laws, which now the whole world has been able to witness firsthand following the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria.

□ 1030

Before that, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans have already rejected this discrimination, choosing, instead, to buy their equality with a one-way airline ticket to Florida or simply changing their State ZIP Code.

Without the equal rights and responsibilities that are only available through statehood, Puerto Rico will never truly recover and prosper from the hurricane effects. That is the reason we demand and deserve statehood for Puerto Rico now. The islands overwhelmingly voted for statehood in 2012 by a margin of 61 percent, and in June of last year, 97 percent of the islands voted again for statehood.

That is the request that brought me here. That is what brings, today, the Governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, Puerto Rico Senate President Thomas Rivera Schatz, House Speaker Johnny Mendez, and all other elected officials from the island who have come here to witness today's historic introduction of the Puerto Rico shadow delegation to this Congress. That delegation will demand that the United States recognize the will of the people of Puerto Rico to become a State.

This long-awaited action is in accord with the precedents set forth by the Tennessee Plan, adopted by the territories of Tennessee, Michigan, Oregon, California, Iowa, Kansas, and Alaska, which followed a similar path to eventual admission as States.

It is my honor to introduce this delegation of seven members—three Republicans, three Democrats, one Independent, divided into two Senators, five Members to the House—as we become a State.

Pedro Rosselló, former Governor of Puerto Rico, serves as the chair of the delegation; Carlos Romero Barceló to the senate, former Governor and a former Member of the house; Luis Fortuño, former Governor and a former Member of this House; Zoraida Fonalledas, Puerto Rico national com-

mitteewoman and businesswoman; Charlie Rodriguez, State chairman for the DNC and former senate president; Alfonso Aguilar, president of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles; and Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez, a Major League Baseball player inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Puerto Rico has come to this House today to claim the American Dream and to fulfill its destiny, to obtain equality within the Nation, and to unleash our full potential. Statehood will make Puerto Rico stronger, but we, together, will make the United States a more perfect Union.

HONORING SERGEANT MAJOR ROBERT HAWKINS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sergeant Major Robert Hawkins of the United States Army for his extraordinary dedication to duty and service to our Nation. Sergeant Major Hawkins will soon transition from his current assignment as an Army Congressional Legislative Liaison Officer in the House of Representatives to serve in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology.

A native of Alexandria, Virginia, Sergeant Major Hawkins began his military career as an airborne infantryman in 1990. He subsequently served in assignments to the Republic of Panama; Fort Myers, Florida; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and three times at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Sergeant Major Hawkins has served in multiple leadership and staff positions throughout his distinguished career. His combat deployments include one tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and three tours of combat in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2014, Sergeant Major Hawkins was selected as a fellow in the Army Congressional Fellowship Program. He subsequently served 12 months as a defense legislative fellow in my congressional office, representing the First Congressional District of Minnesota.

While working on our team, I came to know Sergeant Major Hawkins as a shining example of the Army values set forth in the Noncommissioned Officer's Creed. "Competence" is indeed Sergeant Major Hawkins' watchword, and his commitment to doing what good NCOs do, accomplishing every mission, while taking care of his teammates, was second to none.

For the next 2 years, Sergeant Major Hawkins served as a Congressional Legislative Liaison Officer in the United States Army House Liaison Division. As the primary link between House Members, their staff, and the committees, along with the Army, he has provided insight and understanding